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Consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2003

Report of the Secretary-General

Executive summary

The present report aims at assisting the Council in providing policy guidance to its functional commissions and in coordinating their work. It provides an analysis of selected major policy issues addressed by the commissions in 2003 and gives an overview of the main common themes that were covered by the commissions in 2003. This year's report, for the first time, highlights the contributions of the commissions to the various segments of the 2003 substantive session of the Council. It also examines the follow-up action by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2002 and reviews key issues relating to coordination or procedural aspects of the work of the commissions in 2003. The report contains a number of recommendations for consideration by the Council.

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Introduction

1. The present consolidated report has been submitted in response to agreed conclusions 2002/1 of the Economic and Social Council[1] and earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and the Council.[2] The Council decided, in its agreed conclusions, that the outcomes of the functional commissions should be considered in the general segment on the basis of their reports and the consolidated report on their work, which should identify cross-cutting policy issues, gaps/overlaps, and areas of complementarity and cooperation, focus on substantive issues and highlight coordination issues requiring the Council's attention within its coordination segment.

I. Major policy issues addressed by the commissions in 2003

2. Again in 2003, the functional commissions covered a broad range of substantive issues -- thus contributing a wealth of analysis directly relevant to the international community's understanding of the policies and actions requested to further progress towards the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of conferences. Two major cross-cutting policy issues emerged from the work of the functional commissions that may be of particular interest to the Council. Information and communication technologies for development gained renewed momentum with the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society, to be held at Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005, and was a focus in a number of commissions. Also, by considering issues, such as population, education and development, youth and ageing, as well as international migration, the commissions helped to advance international understanding of emerging population trends and their implications for development. This year's report, for the first time, also highlights the commissions' contributions to the various segments of the Council's 2003 substantive session.

A. The role of information and communication technologies for development

3. In 2003, two commissions — the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session, in March 2003, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, at its sixth session, in May 2003 — addressed the issue of information and communication technologies (ICT) for development as their main themes. The issue was also considered by other commissions and is reflected in some of their outcome documents.

4. As the Economic and Social Council requested in resolution 2001/31, the substantive theme and focus of the 2001-2003 intersessional work programme of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development has been on "Technology development and capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society". This work programme was carried out through three panels. The Commission's work on ICT is contributing to the World Summit process.

5. At its sixth session, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development reviewed the findings and recommendations of these panels. Representatives praised the ICT development indices developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),[3] in collaboration with

the Commission. Those indices measure connectivity, access, use and policy in about 200 countries and territories. The Commission also analysed the digital divide in terms of inequality in the distribution of hardware equipment and Internet users across countries.

6. There was general consensus that while ICTs offered wide-ranging opportunities, they had also generated new challenges for countries in which technological capability, skill capacity and infrastructure were not sufficiently developed, and that technology and competitiveness could be acquired only when supported by a policy that focused on national capacity-building for technology absorption and technology learning. All countries needed to have a long-term national strategy for developing ICTs and for extending their diffusion. To this end, the Commission was called on to develop further its benchmarking tools in ICTs and to consider the possibility of carrying out ICT needs assessment for interested countries, in particular least developed countries, to assist them to formulate/update national strategies and action plans for ICTs. In several regards the conclusions of the Commission built on policy conclusions that emanated from the work of the Council on ICT in 2000/2001.[4] The Commission is developing collaboration arrangements with the ICT Task Force on all these issues.

7. In the draft resolution it recommended for adoption by the Council, the Commission proposed that the substantive theme and focus of the Commission's work during the intersessional period 2003-2004 be "Promoting the application of science and technology to meet the Millennium Development Goals". All entities of the United Nations system working in these areas were invited to collaborate and provide input to the work of the Commission on this theme.

8. The Commission on the Status of Women reviewed as one of its two main themes the "Participation and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women". This was the first time that the Commission examined the role of ICT from a gender perspective. Consideration of this topic constitutes the Commission's contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society. In its agreed conclusions on the theme, the Commission urged the participation at the World Summit to integrate gender perspectives to every facet of the Summit, and to take into account the Commission's recommendations. The Commission stressed the need to focus on the gender dimensions of ICT in order to prevent and combat any adverse impact of the digital revolution on gender equality, and to enhance the central role of ICT and media for women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality.

9. The Commission adopted a wide range of recommendations for action to be implemented by different actors. Particular attention was paid to women's and girls' education and training in ICT-related fields to ensure their full participation in the information society, and to the inclusion of ICT education in the curricula of all educational levels. The Commission called for strengthened use of existing ICT, such as radio and television, as well as print media for enhancing the economic, social and political empowerment of women, and for promoting local knowledge systems and locally produced content in media and communications.

10. The Commission also proposed steps to combat the negative aspects of ICT and the media, such as negative or stereotyped portrayals of women, and the criminal misuse of ICT for sexual exploitation and trafficking in women and girls.

In addition, the agreed conclusions contain recommendations concerning partnerships to build women's capacity for participation.

11. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its resolution 46/5 on "Improving the exchange of electronic information among Member States and communication with international organizations", commended the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for broadening the mandate and scope of the National Drug Control System to cover the collection, exchange and processing of all data relevant to national and international drug control. It also commended the support provided by UNDCP to Member States in using the National Drug Control System, which has made the processing of data on national and international drug control more feasible. It requested the UNDCP to provide data to Member States by electronic means.

12. At its forty-first session, the Commission for Social Development recognized the use of and access to ICTs as an important issue of concern to young people.[5] The Statistical Commission included ICT statistics in the agenda for its 2004 session. In 2005, it will consider the "definition and measurement of the so-called information society". Measures to combat computer-related crime will be one of the issues considered by a workshop within the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.[6]

13. One of the main themes addressed in the 2004 annual report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration will be "Bridging the digital divide".

Recommendations

The Council may wish to:

(a) **Urge the World Summit on the Information Society to integrate gender perspectives in every facet of the Summit and to take account of the contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development;**

(b) **Call upon the commissions to integrate the outcome of the first phase of the World Summit, to be held at Geneva in December 2003, into their work and to find ways to contribute — in their respective areas of expertise — to the second phase of the Summit, to be held in Tunis in 2005; and invite the information and communication technologies Task Force to make findings of its work available to functional commissions concerned to support their deliberations;**

(c) **Invite the commissions, in particular the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to enhance collaboration with the ICT Task Force and other United Nations entities active in ICTs to support the ability of developing countries to participate effectively in international ICT policy development and harmonization;**[7]

(d) **Welcome the proposal of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to focus on promoting the application of science and technology to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and call upon United Nations system organizations concerned to contribute to that theme.**

B. Population trends and their social dimensions

14. Another major policy focus in the work of the commissions in 2003 related to emerging population trends, their social dimensions and their implications for development. This problematique and notably the various dimensions of the migration issue, and the implications of the shift in the relative proportions of the youth and the aged in most parts of the world, were also among the priority areas identified by the Secretary-General in his report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387).

15. Noting the critical linkages between population, education and development, the Commission on Population and Development, at its thirty-sixth session, adopted a resolution requesting the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to continue its research, and the United Nations Population Fund to continue its programming on the linkages between population factors and the attainment of the goals of Education for All, giving attention to the way in which education interacts with health, particularly sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and to the way in which education influences the levels, trends and differentials of mortality, fertility, distribution and mobility, and the role of population and development policies, as well as gender inequalities in such levels, trends and differentials.[8]

16. The Commission's deliberations reaffirmed the right to education and the importance of improving educational quality and opportunities, especially for girls. Beginning with the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, the World Education Forum in 2000 and the Millennium Summit in 2000, the international community has explicitly recognized that education, especially primary schooling, is critical for achieving social and demographic progress, sustained economic development and gender equality. The Economic and Social Council Ministerial Declaration of 2002 reaffirmed the commitment to mobilize political will and resources for Education for All.

17. The Commission on Population and Development also looked at the interrelationship between education and international migration. Recent years have witnessed rapid internationalization of educational systems in many countries. Education has been characterized as one of the fundamental measures of the contribution of international migrants to the receiving country and loss to the sending country.[9]

18. At its fifty-ninth session, in March-April 2003, the Commission on Human Rights dealt with social and human rights dimensions of international migration. It adopted resolution 2003/46, on the "Human rights of migrants" as well as resolution 2003/48, on the "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families" acknowledging with appreciation the entry into force of the Convention. At its next session, the Commission on the Status of Women is to consider the issue of international migrants from a social perspective under the agenda item "Emerging issues".

19. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recommended draft resolution II to the Council for adoption, urging Member States to deposit their instruments of ratification, approval or accession to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. The Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress

and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children are two of three Protocols supplementing the Convention. The Vienna-based Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within the framework of its Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, has established a database on trafficking flows that includes data from multiple sources on global trends, cross-national routes and the volume of trafficking in persons.[10] The thematic discussion by the Commission on trafficking in human beings, especially women and children acknowledged the fact that the root causes of trafficking, such as unemployment, poverty, limited education opportunities and other socio-economic factors might be the same as those behind smuggling of migrants.

20. The General Assembly considers the subject of international migration and development. The report of the Secretary-General for that agenda item addresses, inter alia, the question of the convening of an international conference on migration and development. The Assembly has also adopted a number of resolutions on women migrant workers.[11] The work of the functional commissions is thus helping to advance the policy debate on the various facets and impacts of international migration and its relationship with social development and related internationally agreed goals.

21. The Commission for Social Development discussed some of the economic and social dimensions of youth- and ageing-related issues, including their population dimensions. It recommended a draft resolution[12] for adoption by the Council, recalling its responsibility for follow-up to and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The Commission also reiterated the importance of integrating into its work the different dimensions of population ageing as contained in the Plan of Action. In a draft resolution on policies and programmes involving youth,[13] the Commission highlighted a number of issues of special concern to young people, including the use of and access to ICT, the impact of globalization, the increase of HIV infections among young people, the involvement of young people in armed conflict, and the increased importance of addressing inter-generational issues in an ageing society.

22. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 46/2 on strengthening strategies regarding the prevention of HIV/AIDS in the context of drug abuse. It called upon Member States to take account of drug-related HIV infection issues in their national drug control policies.

23. At its thirty-fourth session, in 2003, the Statistical Commission endorsed the programme of proposed action to be taken by the United Nations Statistics Division in support of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. In 2004, the Commission will consider, under agenda item 3, population and housing censuses.

Recommendations

(a) **The Council could encourage its functional commissions to continue to include the consideration of the socio-economic dimensions and impact of population trends in their discussions. This could be a particular focus in the work of the Commission on Population and Development on the second quinquennial review of the International Conference on Population and Development next year. The Commission for Social Development should pay particular attention to these issues in its review of the implementation of the**

outcome of the Social Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly in 2005.

(b) **Commissions may be urged to pay special attention to the issue of international migration and development. In particular, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should continue to address the challenges posed by international migration and coordinate their work in that field.**

C. Input of the commissions to the Council's high-level segment theme in 2003 on "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development"

24. The Council invited its functional commissions in paragraph 13 of its agreed conclusions 2002/1, to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their area of work. In earlier resolutions, e.g., resolution 2001/27, paragraph 3, the Council stressed that those inputs of its commissions should be concise and action-oriented and that functional commissions could utilize, as applicable, their standing agenda item on new trends and emerging issues affecting the overall goals within their mandates.

25. In this regard, it was pointed out during some of the joint bureaux meetings of the Council and the functional commissions, that the timing of the Council's selection of the themes for its high-level segment made it difficult for some commissions to make specific contributions. In addition, it was noted that the high-level segment theme was often chosen without much reference to the multi-year work programmes of the functional commissions, thus compounding the difficulty for the commissions to make substantive contributions. These issues may need to be addressed by the Council. Nevertheless, some commissions provided specific contributions.

26. At its fifth session, in 2001, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, under the substantive theme of "National capacity-building in biotechnology", addressed the opportunities and challenges presented by new and emerging biotechnologies, and formulated a strategy for national capacity-building in biotechnology to support efforts in rural development, including, inter alia, improving food security, agricultural productivity, health and environmental sustainability. At its sixth session, in 2003, the Commission recommended a draft decision for adoption by the Council on its contribution on this topic to the Council's high-level segment in 2003.

27. The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women submitted a conference room paper,[14] on promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for eradication of poverty and sustainable development, to the President of the Council for the use of the Council in the preparations for and during the high-level segment. The note provided an overview of provisions contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and relevant resolutions of the

Assembly and agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women aimed at the situation of women in rural areas.

28. The Statistical Commission noted with satisfaction the progress in agriculture statistics, in particular, the modernization of FAOSTAT (online FAO statistical database), the promotion of the decennial programme of the World Census of Agriculture and the renewed activities in agricultural producer price statistics; it agreed with the proposal to create an international advisory panel on agriculture statistics.

29. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has extensive experience in reviewing the efforts of Governments to eradicate illicit crops through alternative development. At its forty-sixth session, the Commission adopted a resolution on strengthening alternative development through trade and socio-environmental preservation. The Joint Ministerial Statement adopted at the ministerial-level segment of that session also addressed international cooperation in illicit crop eradication and alternative development. While important progress had been made in this area, more efforts were needed to prevent illicit cultivation of narcotic crops from re-emerging or relocating.

30. The United Nations Forum on Forests addressed several issues that have a direct impact on promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, for example, economic aspects of forests, forest health and productivity and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs, as well as land tenure, in particular for the well-being of indigenous people and local communities living near forests, and partnerships. The Forum encouraged countries to mainstream sustainable forest management strategies into their national poverty reduction strategies and national development programmes in order to enhance national cross-sectoral coordination; and also encouraged the promotion of aforestation and reforestation for marginal farm lands, wastelands and degraded lands.

Recommendation

The Council could invite the Commissions to continue to provide concise, action-oriented input to its annual high-level segment. The inputs could be submitted in various forms, including a conference room paper (as in the case of the Commission on the Status of Women). The Council could also consider inviting the chairs or bureau members of functional commissions to panels and round tables for the high-level segment, as an occasion to contribute to its deliberations.

D. Input of the commissions to the Council's coordination segment theme in 2003 on "The role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits"

31. The coordination segment of the Council in 2003 will be devoted to the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. While the functional commissions did not provide special inputs to that segment, their work is

in large part devoted to the follow-up and implementation of major United Nations conferences and summits.

1. The role of the Economic and Social Council in translating the work of the functional commissions into operational guidance

32. The functional commissions provided guidance on several common themes of conferences in 2003. Certain aspects of the functional commissions' guidance would require the attention of the funds, programmes and other organizations of the United Nations.

33. For instance, the agreed conclusions of the Commission for Social Development on national and international cooperation for social development invite the international financial institutions to strengthen further their efforts to ensure that improved social outcome is incorporated into their programmes of assistance, taking into account that poverty reduction strategies should be nationally owned. The Commission also noted that, where poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) exist, a broad platform is necessary to place them within a wider context where all social objectives would be adequately taken into account.

34. As part of the effort to promote coherent implementation and follow-up to conferences throughout the United Nations system, the Council could take a more active role to ensure that the guidance of the functional commissions is translated into the operational work of funds and programmes and concerned agencies in the United Nations system.

2. Multi-year approach to conference follow-up

35. In the context of the work of the open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, growing attention has been given to the idea that the Economic and Social Council should establish a multi-year work programme for addressing common themes of conferences. This would enable functional commissions to contribute to the work of the Council from their own specific perspective. It would also enable them to draw from the Council's work on such common themes in their own debates.

36. In establishing its own work programme, the Council may also wish to take into account the multi-year work programme of its commissions. The commissions have also recommended that the Council address specific themes. The Commission on Sustainable Development suggested that the Council organize periodic consideration of sustainable development themes in regard to the further implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the decisions of the Commission sessions. The Commission for Social Development invited the Council to continue to include consideration of the integration of economic and social policies as one of the thematic areas to be addressed in future debates.

37. An important dimension of the Council's role in promoting integrated follow-up to conferences is to ensure that the work programmes of its functional commissions are well coordinated and enable the United Nations to address major common themes emanating from conferences.

38. According to its provisional agenda, the Commission on Population and Development, in 2004, will be devoted to the second quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action. This review and appraisal will follow a thematic approach, focusing on cross-cutting themes.[15] The Commission for Social Development is also scheduled to review comprehensively the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly in 2005. That same year, the Commission on the Status of Women will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Care should be exercised to ensure that the work of these commissions in 2004 and 2005 does not lead to repetitive negotiations on common themes.

39. Likewise, the Commission on Population and Development will examine population, development and HIV/AIDS in 2005; and the Commission on Sustainable Development will address water, sanitation and human settlements in 2005. In addressing these themes, these commissions should cooperate and draw from the work of the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, respectively.

3. Enhancing the impact of the work of the functional commissions on implementation and on policy development

40. The 2003 session and outcomes of the Commission on Sustainable Development provided important lessons on how the functional commissions could focus their work to best support the implementation of goals and commitments of conferences (see section III below). In a draft resolution recommended by the Commission for adoption by the Council, the Secretary-General is requested to include in his report on the World Summit on Sustainable Development proposals outlining an integrated and comprehensive response of the United Nations system to sustainable development, taking into account the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on Conference Follow-up. It is also recommended that the Commission take into account the outcome of the work of the Working Group.

41. The work of several other commissions, notably the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, is prepared through expert group meetings and/or regional meetings to enable them to root their work in expertise and experience from a range of countries. The commissions are also enhancing their role in high-level policy debate (see section III).

42. It may also be noted that the Commission for Social Development decided to adopt a bottom-up approach to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. It invited Governments as well as the United Nations system and civil society to participate in this approach through, inter alia, sharing of ideas, data collection and identification of best practices.

43. These approaches may be of interest to the Council and the General Assembly as they discuss processes for the review and appraisal of conferences. The coordination segment of the Council may be the occasion for the Council to take stock of these positive developments in the working methods of functional commissions and encourage further progress so as to maximize their impact on

implementation of conference outcomes drawing from the work of the Working Group.

4. Basic indicators related to United Nations conferences

44. Since 1998, the Council and the Statistical Commission have been engaged in a discussion of basic indicators related to recent United Nations conferences and summits. This year, the Statistical Commission authorized its Chairman to finalize a comprehensive report on development indicators requested by the Council. The report should emphasize the need for capacity-building in statistics in developing countries to meet the range of needs for indicators on a sustainable basis. The need was also stressed to pay particular attention to indicators to monitor the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8, "Develop a global partnership for development". The report will be before the Council at its coordination as well as its general segment.

45. In addition to the Statistical Commission, a number of other commissions are pursuing the consideration of indicators in their respective fields. The United Nations Forum on Forests highlighted the usefulness of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management frameworks for the development of national forest policy and planning efforts. It will consider in 2004, as a particular agenda item, "Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management". As noted above, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, has drawn up ICT Development Indices.[3] In the context of the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the advisory committee established by the Statistical Commission will open a dialogue with concerned stakeholders to review required and proposed indicators.[2] In the outcome document of the Commission on Sustainable Development, further work on indicators for sustainable development by countries at the national level, including integration of gender aspects, in line with national conditions and priorities was recommended.

Recommendations

(a) **In future years, the consolidated report could identify operational implications of the work of the functional commissions on the common conference themes addressed by the Council at the coordination segment.**

(b) **The Council could appeal to its functional commissions in their review of conference implementation in 2004 and 2005 to avoid repetitive negotiations on common themes of conferences and to draw on the work of the Council and the General Assembly on these themes.**

(c) **The Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on the Status of Women may be urged to collaborate closely on the themes of their 2005 sessions, including through joint bureaux meetings.**

(d) **The Statistical Commission should strengthen its collaboration with concerned stakeholders, such as organizations in the United Nations system — and other functional commissions — to achieve further harmonization of conference indicators.**

E. Input of the commissions to the Council's operational activities segment

46. At the operational activities segment, the Council will address, inter alia, funding for development cooperation activities of the United Nations system and assessment of lessons learned at the country level from evaluations of United Nations system organizations.

47. As part of the focus of implementation of conference outcomes, commissions are giving growing attention to operational activities and technical cooperation. For example, the Commission for Social Development heard from experts based in developing countries on operationalizing social development mandates.

48. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development has often underscored that coherent policy guidance and better coordination are needed in the area of science and technology. The Commission resolved, this year, to play an active role within the United Nations system in the analysis, promotion and recommendation of applications of science and technology to meet the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, it will ensure that the Science and Technology for Development Network (STDev) further develops and expands into an inter-agency gateway on information on science and technology activities.

49. Cooperation among the funds, programmes and specialized agencies was stressed in the documentation for the Commission on Population and Development and in its resolution on "Population, education and development".[16] The Commission confirmed that multilateral assistance to population activities provided by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, notably UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, for assisting in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD has increased considerably since 2000.[17]

50. The Commission on the Status of Women this year again adopted a resolution on "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system".[18] It invited all entities of the United Nations system to identify remaining gaps in policy frameworks and strategies and assess the impact of such frameworks and strategies so that future programmes, capacity-building and institutional measures can be better designed and targeted. Its resolution on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan provides detailed guidance for programmes in the country.

51. The Commission for Social Development welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in a resolution on this topic. It encouraged the United Nations system to support NEPAD in a coordinated way and foster a coherent response to it. The Commission called upon the Secretary-General to harmonize the current initiatives to enhance coordination between the United Nations and its specialized programmes and funds.[19]

52. The Commission on Human Rights has a standing agenda on advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights. The United Nations Technical Cooperation Programme in the Field of Human Rights has been engaged since 1955 in assisting States, at their request, in the building and strengthening of national structures that have a direct impact on the overall observance of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law.

53. The enhanced focus on implementation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to contribute to broadening the scope and reach of operational activities of the United Nations system in three distinct ways. First, stronger linkages between normative work at the global and country level on implementation measures. For this purpose, the Commission has invited United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to participate actively in its work and provide information about their ongoing work in the field. Secondly, the Secretariat of the Commission, working in close cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system, will provide technical assistance to countries in national reporting. Thirdly, it is promoting partnerships at the operational level that will include Member States, United Nations system organizations and other relevant actors.

54. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice noted the increasing scope of the technical cooperation and assistance activities undertaken by the Centre for International Crime Prevention and called upon all countries to make voluntary contributions to the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund. It invited the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to explore creative new funding mechanisms, such as contributions from the private sector and other partnership options. It called for technical assistance for areas such as preventing and combating trafficking in persons and terrorism, as well as implementation of conventions and capacity-building at the national level.

55. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs addressed the world drug problem, which constitutes a serious threat to public health and well-being, and undermines socio-economic and political stability and sustainable development. Ongoing links between illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and other national and transnational criminal activities pose a serious threat throughout the world. One of the challenges remains the further implementation by States of the comprehensive strategy adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session that combines alternative development, law enforcement, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and education, as well as preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases associated with drug abuse. Relevant United Nations agencies and entities and international financial institutions should mainstream drug control issues into their programmes, with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs playing a coordinating role.

56. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests, an informal arrangement for fostering increased cooperation and coordination on forests, consisting of 14 member organizations, was established in 2001 to support United Nations Forum on Forests and its member countries. The members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are invited by the Forum on almost every item of its agenda in specific terms to strengthen the capacity of countries for implementation. At its third session, the Forum expressed its appreciation to the members of the Collaborative for their individual and collective efforts to facilitate practical implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action, including through national forest programmes.

Recommendations

(a) **The Council may wish to consider ways of promoting closer and more effective interaction between the work of the functional commissions and that of the governing bodies of United Nations funds and programmes, and of**

ensuring that United Nations funds and programmes draw, as appropriate, on relevant policy guidance from the commissions.

(b) **The Council could invite its commissions and their Secretariats to more visibly identify operational implications of their work to help to maximize the impact on the system's work.**

(c) **The Council could also invite the Commission on the Status of Women to work closely with the funds and programmes on gender mainstreaming in view of the forthcoming review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 which the Council had agreed to undertake before 2005.**

F. Input of the commissions to the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council

57. This year theme of the humanitarian affairs segment is "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, and transition from relief to development".

58. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolutions on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, called for the strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance.[20] It invited the United Nations system to ensure the full and effective participation of Afghan women in all stages of humanitarian assistance, recovery, reconstruction and development. The resolution also called upon international institutions and donors to support measures for the employment of women and the integration of a gender perspective into all social, development and reconstruction programmes, taking into account the special needs of widows and returning refugee and displaced women and girls as well as those living in rural areas. The resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women[21] called upon the international community to provide urgently needed assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families and to help in the reconstruction of relevant Palestinian institutions.

59. The Commission on the Status of Women discussed the spread of HIV/AIDS in emergency situations and encouraged the continued collaboration of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other United Nations agencies and programmes and other international organizations to address and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. It addressed the growing link between HIV/AIDS and other programmes, including humanitarian programmes.

60. The Commission on Human Rights addressed the humanitarian dimension of the problem of internal displacement. It noted the increased attention paid to internally displaced persons in the consolidated inter-agency appeals process and encouraged further efforts to improve the integration of their protection and assistance needs in consolidated appeals. In addition, the Commission appointed a special rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to study the issue of "Housing and property restitution in the context of refugees and other displaced persons".[22] The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is of the view that the interrelationship between crime and

development and changes in economic and social structures should be accompanied by appropriate reforms in criminal justice, so as to ensure the responsiveness of the penal system to the basic values and development goals of society.

Recommendation

The Council could take into account the contribution of its functional commissions on humanitarian issues at its humanitarian segment.

II. Follow-up by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2002

61. The functional commissions were informed of the outcome of the Council's session in July 2002 in a letter dated 31 October 2002 from the President of the Council to the chairpersons of the commissions.[23]

62. The President drew the particular attention of the chairpersons to agreed conclusions 2002/1[1] on strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it to fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the Millennium Declaration. In paragraph 13 of the agreed conclusions, the Council called upon functional commissions to further enhance their role as the main forums for expert follow-up and review of United Nations conferences and summits and invited the commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they related to their area of work.

63. In addition, the President made reference to resolution 2002/23, in which the Council called upon the functional commissions to intensify their efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in their work and to continue their efforts to address gender perspectives in relation to the thematic issues of their multi-year programmes of work or in relation to annual themes.

64. Last year, the Council did not adopt a resolution based on the consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions. It, thus, did not provide detailed guidance on other issues linked to the coordination and substance of their work.

65. The work of several commissions in 2003 highlighted their role as the main forums for expert follow-up and review of United Nations conferences and summits. The Commission for Social Development recalled its responsibility for follow-up and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Commission on Population and Development established the provisional agenda for its session in 2004, which will be marked by the second quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

66. The Commission on the Status of Women considered a report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions,[24] which focused on the Council's guidance on gender mainstreaming, as reflected in resolution 2002/23, and its invitation to the Commission to continue its efforts to highlight gender perspectives in the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. The Commission for Social Development, the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Science and Technology

for Development addressed gender perspectives in relation to their areas of work in several of their outcome documents.

67. The Statistical Commission had before it a note by the Secretary-General on policy decisions of the Council that are relevant to the work of the Commission.[25] In addition, it considered reports on the statistical implications of the work of the Commission for Social Development[26] and those of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[27]

III. Key issues relating to coordination or procedural aspects of the work of the commissions in 2003

A. Working methods

68. The majority of functional commissions closely examined their working methods, either intersessionally, or during their sessions in 2003, and several introduced innovations in this regard.

69. The Commission on Sustainable Development introduced a radical change in its elaboration of a future work programme by deciding, in order to fulfil its mandate in coming years, to reorganize its future work cycle into a series of two-year action-oriented "implementation cycles", which would include in the first year of the cycle a "review session", and in the second, a "policy session". This is reflected in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission, which has now been adopted in a series of two-year cycles from 2004 until 2017. Furthermore, and in the light of its new format, the Commission also decided to request the Council to consider extending to two years the tenure of the bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development for future sessions so as to coincide with the institution of the two-year work cycle.

70. Several Commissions held high-level segments, which enhanced their role in policy debate. The Commission on the Status of Women held its first high-level round table on 4 March 2003, on national experiences in institutional capacity-building, with specific focus on the two themes considered by the commission during its session (media and ICT, and human rights of women/violence against women). Ministers and other senior representatives of national machineries for the advancement of women participated in a free-flowing, interactive dialogue that enabled sharing of practical experiences, lessons learned and obstacles encountered in institutional capacity-building. Participants welcomed this new initiative, and encouraged its continuation and further refinement. The Commission on Sustainable Development decided to continue its high-level segments in future years. This year's segment was well attended.

71. Sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs include a thematic debate, except for the 2003 session, which included a two-day ministerial-level meeting focusing on the assessment of the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered in meeting the goals set out at the special session of the General Assembly. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted a draft resolution for approval by the Council on its functioning, in which the Council would decide, that, with effect from the year 2004, the Commission should, at the end of each

session, elect its bureau for the subsequent session and encourage it to play an active role during the intersessional period.

72. The Commission on Population and Development, introduced for the first time, an innovation aimed at enlivening the consideration of its special theme on "Population, education and development" by hearing two keynote addresses by eminent speakers, which successfully helped to stimulate the discussion of the issues and was very well received. The keynote addresses for the first time replaced the traditional holding of panel discussions on the theme.

73. For the first time, and in accordance with Council resolution 2002/37, the regular sessions of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development will be held annually instead of every other year. This practice already began at its sixth session, at which the Commission discussed ways and means of optimizing its work and enhancing its effectiveness in the light of this new development. It may also be noted that, in response to Council resolution 2002/37, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development established an open-ended working group to examine possible approaches for improving its role and participation in the recommendation and policy-making processes of the United Nations system on science and technology issues. The resolution adopted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the subject takes note of the report of the working group. The Commission will continue to keep the Council abreast of developments in this regard, as the importance of science and technology cuts across the work of several commissions.

B. Coordination among commissions

74. The most common means employed by the functional commissions to enhance coordination on issues of mutual concern continues to be through the exchange of reports and other documents. As the substantive secretariats of six of the functional commissions[28] are all located within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, they regularly discuss their work programmes and areas of mutual interest and common concerns, and ways to give consistency and coherence to the work of the functional commissions.

75. The Commission on the Status of Women has continued its close collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights. At its session this year, for the first time, the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights addressed the Commission on the Status of Women during the general debate. As has been done in prior years, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women attended the Commission on Human Rights and addressed the Commission under the agenda item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective". This form of collaboration continues to promote a valuable synergy between the two functional commissions.

76. In its resolution on the human rights of persons with disabilities, the Commission on Human Rights invited the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development to address the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session.

77. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development provided work done in the area of biotechnology as inputs for the work programme of the

Commission on Sustainable Development. The Statistical Commission continues to circulate, to the secretariats of the other functional commissions, relevant extracts of its reports for their information. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice continues its close collaboration with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and is benefiting from the increased synergies that exist between their two secretariats, which now provide common servicing for both commissions.

C. Cooperation with the Council (outcome of joint bureaux meetings)

78. As mandated by the Council in resolutions 1998/46 and 2001/27, annual meetings took place once again in 2003 between the Council bureau and the bureaux of its functional commissions. For the first time, the secretariat of each functional commission produced a discussion paper in an effort to provide greater focus in the discussion of issues of interest to both the bureau of the Council and the commissions, as well as those that each commission wished to bring to the Council bureau's attention. Overall, discussion centred around the work of the commissions in 2003, their possible contribution to the work of the Council, and measures to enhance collaboration among the functional commissions themselves.

79. The general view was that these meetings serve a very valuable purpose in that they help to promote policy coherence between the Council and its functional commissions. The interaction enables each to be informed about the other's work.

80. In addition, the convening of a meeting of the chairpersons of the functional commissions during the general segment of the Council in 2002 had been considered to be very productive, and accordingly, a similar meeting during the general segment of the Council in 2003 is again planned.

Recommendations

(a) **The Council could examine the outcome of the joint meetings of its bureaux with those of the functional commissions. It could consider inviting its bureau to focus its consultations with the bureaux of commissions on their contributions to common themes, e.g., the theme of the Council coordination segment.**

(b) **The Council may wish to give guidance on the format of the consolidated report for 2004 and on whether the report should follow a thematic approach as it did this year.**

Notes

[1] A/57/3 (Part II), chap. V (to be issued in *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/57/3/Rev.1)).

[2] General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B; Council resolutions 1998/46, 1998/47, 1998/49, 1999/1, 1999/51 and 2001/27.

[3] UNCTAD, *Information and Communication Technology Development Indices* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.D.14).

[4] For the report of the information and communication technologies Task Force, see E/2003/56 and Corr.1.

[5] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 6* (E/2003/26), chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution I.

[6] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 10* (E/2002/30 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect A, draft resolution IV entitled "Preparations for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice" (to be recommended by the Council for adoption by the General Assembly).

[7] See E/CN.16/2003/2.

[8] E/CN.9/2003/L.5.

[9] See E/CN.9/2003/2, para. 93.

[10] Report of the Executive Director on the work of the Centre for International Crime Prevention (E/CN.15/2003/2).

[11] General Assembly resolutions 56/131, 54/138, 52/97.

[12] E/2003/26, chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution IV.

[13] Ibid., draft resolution I.

[14] E/CN.6/2003/CRP.4.

[15] See E/CN.9/2003/L.2/Rev.1.

[16] See E/CN.9/2003/3.

[17] See E/CN.9/2003/4.

[18] E/CN.6/2003/L.3/Rev.1.

[19] Draft resolution III.

[20] E/CN.6/2003/L.4/Rev.1.

[21] E/CN.6/2003/L.1.

[22] Decision 2003/109.

[23] E/CN.6/2003/9.

[24] E/CN.6/2003/10.

[25] E/CN.3/2003/28.

[26] E/CN.3/2003/32.

[27] E/CN.3/2003/33.

[28] Commission for Social Development, Commission on Population and Development, Statistical Commission, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Sustainable Development and United Nations Forum on Forests.